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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4154
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0901
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0084
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0258
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0589
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1584
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0120
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0632
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001919

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [IR](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: SPEAKER CALLS OFF THE DOGS IN UNSCR IRAN VOTE
BATTLE

REF: A. JAKARTA 1629

[B](#). JAKARTA 972

[C](#). JAKARTA 930

Classified By: Joseph L. Novak, Counselor for Political Affairs, reason
s: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (S) In a hopeful sign for President Yudhoyono in his three-month pitched battle with the House of Representatives (DPR) over Indonesia's support for UNSCR 1747, DPR Speaker Laksono has reportedly decided to let the interpellation matter drop. The Speaker's party, Golkar, which controls the largest DPR faction, has also halted its calls for the President to explain the GOI's vote before a formal plenary session. In a symbolic effort to strike a compromise and put the matter to rest, President Yudhoyono visited the DPR on July 3 to explain the government's position on the Iran vote to a select gathering. On July 10, the President dispatched a trusted minister to a half empty DPR plenary session to once again explain the vote on his behalf. Though several parliamentarians continued their frontal assault on the President on the UNSCR vote, increasingly the issue appeared to be running its course. According to a contact in the Speaker's office, Iran's alleged DPR middleman tried unsuccessfully to contact the Speaker in recent weeks, though he could not confirm whether the Iranian government had deliberately attempted to prolong the interpellation standoff. End Summary.

A TEST OF WILLS

[1](#)2. (C) As reported in reftels, President Yudhoyono has consistently resisted the DPR's efforts to force him to explain formally the Iran vote before a DPR plenary session, arguing that he was not legally required to do so. Though conventional wisdom held that the President could have put the matter to rest at any point simply by delivering a speech to a plenary session and delegating follow-on questions to a Cabinet member, the President held to the view that submitting to the DPR's request would have shown weakness. Dadan Irawan, a Golkar contact, told us that Vice President

Kalla unsuccessfully made the case for the President to appear before a plenary, warning that if the President did not accede to the request to explain the Iran vote, he could face repercussions down the road in the form of a concerted push to query him in an interpellation over the Lapindo mud situation (Note: This would potentially expose the President to uncomfortable questions about the GOI's handling of the toxic mud spill in Eastern Java. End Note). This, the Vice President asserted, would undoubtedly have far more serious political implications for the President than the Iran vote interpellation outcry.

13. (S) On July 3, in an effort to settle the issue, the President traveled to the DPR to explain the GOI's Iran vote to a limited gathering. SBY briefed the Speaker, his three deputies, the leaders of all 10 political factions, as well as the Chairmen of all 11 DPR Commissions. Though at least three parliamentarians walked out in protest during the five-hour closed door briefing, the majority of those assembled for the meeting publicly expressed satisfaction with the President's explanation of the vote. According to Speaker Laksono's top political aide, Arief Budiman (please protect), Laksono was among those satisfied with the President's explanation and content to allow the matter to drop.

14. (C) With the Speaker's objections out of the way, Coordinating Minister Widodo was able to represent the President during a July 11 DPR plenary session on the Iran issue, thereby satisfying the government's legal obligation to respond to the interpellation request. In marked contrast to the raucous June 5 plenary session, during which the DPR refused to accept the testimony of any of SBY's seven ministers sent to discuss the Iran vote (Ref A), this time

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the DPR greeted Widodo's arrival with a collective yawn. Only approximately half of the DPR's 550 parliamentarians even bothered to attend the session, a clear sign that many parliamentarians have already moved on.

15. (C) While momentum on the Iran interpellation issue has clearly waned, the issue has not disappeared entirely. One notable holdout was Abdillah Toha, a well-respected parliamentarian from the Islamic National Mandate (PAN) faction, who has signaled his desire to take the issue to the Constitutional Court. Toha has continued to publicly blast the President for the Iran vote and has doggedly maintained that he would not rest until the President was forced to appear before a plenary session. The Indonesian Democratic Party - Struggle (PDI-P), the de facto opposition party in the DPR, has also declined to relent on the issue, though the party has reflexively opposed the President on virtually every issue since he assumed office in 2004.

BUT IS IRAN HAPPY?

16. (S) As reported in Ref B, Speaker Laksono's aide, Arief Budiman, told us that Iran played a major role in initiating the outcry over the UNSCR 1747 vote. Arief reported that Iran had offered unspecified future oil concessions to the Speaker and several political party faction heads in exchange for their loyalty to Iran's pursuit of a nuclear program for "peaceful purposes." When we asked Arief recently whether Iran had explicitly pushed the Speaker and its other alleged proxies in the DPR to maintain the interpellation pressure on the President, Arief told us that he could not confirm whether that was the case. Arief said that he believed the Speaker and many of the faction heads kept the pressure on the President in an effort to please the Iranian government and hopefully salvage possible future business arrangements, but he was not aware of any direct instruction from the Iranian government on the matter to the Speaker. Arief alleged the prominent Indonesian scholar and unofficial Indonesian Shi'a spokesperson Jalaluddin Rahmat was Iran's

middleman in its communications with the DPR, and told us that he had repeatedly deflected Jalaluddin's attempts to contact the Speaker in recent weeks. Though he could not be sure why Jalaluddin wanted to talk to the Speaker, he suspected Jalaluddin sought to influence the Speaker's thinking on the interpellation issue.

COMMENT

17. (C) Speaker Laksono's decision to relent in the interpellation battle appeared to have defanged the movement and finally eased the pressure on President Yudhoyono. Though five of the DPR's 10 factions remained at least nominally inclined to continue to press the President on the issue, our contacts reported the issue would likely fizzle out. Laksono and the DPR clearly demonstrated their ability to make life for the President unpleasant, but this effort may have come at a public relations cost; most Indonesians have struggled to understand what this test of wills ultimately accomplished. As for how this issue will impact Indonesia's behavior on the Security Council, the GOI most assuredly will proceed only with great caution on any future Iran votes.

HUME